



## Turning 40 - What to Know Before Your First Mammogram Celebrating National Mammography Day with Knowledge and Empowerment

ADDISON, Texas (Oct. 18, 2017)—The year 1977 saw a great many milestones – flare jeans were made famous by John Travolta’s role in “Saturday Night Fever”; the first “Star Wars” movie premiered; Apple II Computer debuted; Jimmy Carter was the 39th U.S. President; Orlando Bloom, Gavin DeGraw and Liv Tyler were born; and “Laverne & Shirley” was nearly tied with “Happy Days” as the most popular television show. Fast forward to 2017: women born in 1977 celebrate their fabulous 40th birthday this year – which also means it’s time for them to start getting their annual mammogram.

**Why begin mammograms at age 40?** The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Radiology, the Society for Breast Imaging and the radiologists who practice at the nation's largest independent provider of breast screening services – [Solis Mammography](#) – all agree that a woman should begin regular, annual mammograms at age 40. Experts concur that the early detection



afforded by regular, annual mammography offers the best opportunity for proactive and early treatment, minimizing the expense, stress and invasiveness that comes with later-stage diagnosis.

In honor of National Mammography Day on Oct. 20, Solis Mammography has created a guide to help prepare women for their first annual mammogram.

“I recently spoke to a group of 50 women about the importance of annual mammography. Of the group, five had just turned 40 and had not yet had their mammogram,” said Connie Oliver, vice president of marketing for Solis. “No surprise, they were dreading it. By the end of the talk, they were reassured and ready to schedule. This solidifies what we already know – that women empowered with knowledge, and not with fear-based hyperbole, will make the right decision for their unique health.”

**The Power to Choose:** If a woman isn’t experiencing any symptoms or concerns and is 40 years and older, she doesn’t need a physician’s order to get her annual screening mammogram (2-D or 3-D). She can choose the facility of her choice – preferably a facility that specializes in breast screening. This freedom means a woman can and should choose providers based on attributes most important to her – convenient locations, patient-centric services, the latest in technology and specialization in her area of need.

**Questions to Ask:** As with most healthcare fields, specialists offer better expertise than generalists. For this reason, find a facility that is a dedicated breast screening center. These centers should offer fellowship-trained, breast-dedicated radiologists who read a high volume of both screening and diagnostic mammograms through “batch reading.” This protocol focuses on interpretation of screening mammograms without interruption, ensuring the most accurate readings. And staff technologists dedicated to breast health are experts in knowing how much compression is enough to get a good image but not too much as to cause unnecessary discomfort.

**Results:** When choosing your provider, ask how and when results will be delivered. Understanding most women find the waiting for their mammography result to be the most stressful part of the procedure, Solis

Mammography delivers results to patients fast, usually within 24 to 48 hours. Results are delivered by secure email, meaning women get their results wherever they may be. This delivers peace of mind sooner, helping women avoid the unnecessary stress that comes from not knowing.

**Insist on 3-D:** The new standard of care in mammography is digital breast tomosynthesis – otherwise known as 3-D mammography. More than 140 clinical studies have shown 3-D to deliver superior results over the conventional 2-D mammogram, improving detection by 54 percent and minimizing recalls by 37 percent. The process of getting a 3-D mammogram is nearly identical to conventional 2-D screening. X-rays will be taken of both breasts (one at a time). Each compression lasts about 30 seconds, and the entire procedure only takes 5 to 10 minutes. The only difference is that in the 3-D mammogram, the arm of the screening unit arcs around the breast, allowing upwards of 60-plus images of each breast – offering significantly better views for the radiologist to evaluate.

**Will it Hurt?** Mammograms should be a little uncomfortable, but should not be painful. Again, technologists who are specialists in breast health are highly trained in understanding the unique nature of breast tissue, knowing how much compression to use to get the best images, while still minimizing unnecessary discomfort for the patient. At breast-dedicated Solis Mammography, 89 percent of patients over the past three years have reported that they experienced “little to no discomfort” during their mammogram.

**How Much Time to Allocate?** To plan accordingly, patients should ask how long the appointment will be, start to finish. The entire visit, from arrival to exit, at Solis Mammography typically takes about 30 minutes.

**Cost:** With the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, 2-D mammography is covered 100 percent by nearly all insurance plans. Additionally, Medicare and nearly all major private insurers are now also covering 3-D mammography at 100 percent. Check with your provider to be sure 3-D is covered.

**When to Arrive?** Arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the scheduled appointment time with the following items: insurance card, driver’s license and the name of the physician to whom your results should be sent.

**What to Wear?** Wear a two-piece outfit, as patients will be asked to remove their top garments only. The facility will offer some type of cover-up to wear on top. At Solis Mammography, these are fabric capes with multiple snaps, to maximize privacy and comfort.

**Things to Avoid:** On the day of the appointment, women should not wear lotion, baby powder, cosmetics, perfume or deodorant underneath their arms or on their breasts. Contents in these substances can sometimes appear on the image. Also, some women prefer not to have their mammogram the week before their menstrual cycle as breasts may be tender or swollen. However, menstrual cycles do not affect mammography results.

**Ask Questions:** The unknown is scary. Ask questions at any time – from the moment one decides to schedule all the way through the exam, including billing. Also, check out the FAQs under Patient Resources on Solis Mammography’s website at <https://www.SolisMammo.com/patient-resources>.

**Bring a Buddy:** What better way to start one’s 40th birthday, and maybe a new annual tradition, than to celebrate friendship and health? Go with a friend to calm any nerves or anxiety – yours or hers. After the exam, do something you both enjoy like lunch, shopping or an afternoon matinee.

“Let’s face it, no one really wants to get a mammogram,” Oliver stated. “What we want is peace of mind: the peace of mind that we are all clear for another year – 93 percent of patients get a clean bill of health, or the peace of mind that comes from early detection, thus offering the best and least invasive options for treatment.”

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please visit [www.SolisMammo.com](http://www.SolisMammo.com).

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## **About Solis Mammography**

With more than 30 years in breast screening, Solis Mammography is a specialized healthcare provider focused on delivering patients an exceptional experience and exceptionally accurate results in mammography and screening services. Headquartered in Addison, Texas, Solis operates 44 centers across six major markets – North Texas; Houston; Phoenix; Columbus, Ohio; Greensboro, North Carolina; and, through its affiliated brand Washington Radiology, Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia. The company operates both wholly-owned centers and multiple successful joint ventures with hospital partners. Serving more than 700,000 patients each year, both Solis Mammography and Washington Radiology offer dedicated experts in breast screening and diagnostic mammography (2-D and 3-D), breast ultrasound, stereotactic biopsy and ultrasound-guided biopsy. In addition, Washington Radiology offers a full range of diagnostic services including general ultrasound, general biopsy, X-ray, MRI and CT screening. For more information, visit [www.SolisMammo.com](http://www.SolisMammo.com), like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Pinterest](#), and subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel.

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